

NEWS

FROM THE

COMMITTEE

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE Institute of Human Relations, 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022, Plaza 1-4000

The American Jewish Committee, founded in 1906, is the pioneer human-relations agency in the United States. It protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad, and advances the cause of improved human relations for all people.

MORTON YARMON, Director of Public Relations

FOR RELEASE MONDAY, April 29, 1968

NEW YORK, April 28...Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois was urged today by the American Jewish Committee to reconvene the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, which he headed, as a means to "place into sharp and dramatic focus those preconditions to riot which are laying loose and perhaps unattended in our own communities and which you so eloquently warned against after studying the disorders of 1967."

In a letter to the Illinois Governor, Bertram H. Gold, Executive Director of the human relations agency, said that a new meeting "would automatically communicate to the Negro community the Commission's intentions to keep the report alive, and to save it from a file-and-forget destiny."

Mr. Gold explained that Senator Fred R. Harris, Oklahoma Democrat who served on the Commission, had first suggested the reconvening of the group at a special meeting of the American Jewish Committee's Board of Governors in Washington on Wednesday, April 3, and that Mayor John V. Lindsay of New York, who was the Commission's vice chairman, had since picked up the suggestion.

The Washington meeting of the American Jewish Committee's policy making board was called to consider means of responding to the Kerner Commission's report. Mr. Gold added that the AJC's membership had since come together at four emergency regional meetings throughout the country, "to which 350 persons from over 50 communities travelled great distances." He went on:

"We in the American Jewish Committee were deeply moved by your

-more-

Morris S. Abram, President; Philip E. Hoffman, Chairman, Executive Board; Orie Laksman, Chairman, Board of Governors; Nathan Aspinwall, Chairman, Board of Trustees
Bertram H. Gold, Executive Director

Washington Office: 818 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 • European Hq.: 30 Rue la Boétie, Paris 8, France • Israel Hq.: 2 Hashofim Street, Tel Aviv, Israel
South American Hq.: San Martín 663, 2 P. 100, Buenos Aires, Argentina • Mexico: Av. Ejército Nacional 539—304, Mexico 17, D.F.

Commission's acutely perceptive findings, and were so motivated as to deploy our total resources in an accelerated and concentrated effort to do our modest share toward confronting your Commission's recommendations."

"We found a great and positive reaction to your Commission's report," Mr. Gold told the Illinois Governor, adding that the AJC's regional meetings "give us confidence that a reconvening of the Commission will result in the re-sensitizing of millions of Americans to the need to be responsive -- now -- to the Commission's historic report."

Accompanying Mr. Gold's letter were copies of two AJC documents: "Checklist of Program Proposals for AJC Emergency Task Forces," which he described as "designed to provide short-range dramatic evidence that segments of white society do care and are acting," and "Thought Starters for Local Action" -- "a compendium of longer-range projects which, like the short-range projects, are responsive to your recommendations."

Founded in 1906, the American Jewish Committee is the pioneer human relations agency in this country. It combats bigotry, protects the civil and religious rights of Jews here and abroad and advances the cause of human rights for all.

###

No. 51

A, AA, AJ, NPL, NPE, COL, NEG-A, NEG-B, P-CR, NYS

4/25/68